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March 16, 2010

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Update

“Training and talking about this topic out there on the deckplates is so important to stopping sexual assaults and setting the tone that sexual assault will not be tolerated.”

– Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick West

Each year, as required by law, the military services supply detailed statistics and other summary information on sexual assaults for the Department of Defense’s [annual report](#) to Congress. The fiscal year (FY) 2009 Report on Sexual Assault in the Military was released to Congress yesterday.

Key Points about Sexual Assault in the Navy

The Navy is actively working to improve the handling and disposition of sexual assault criminal cases.

- The Navy had 558 reports of sexual assault in FY09, including 405 unrestricted reports and 153 restricted reports. Restricted reports allow victims of sexual assault to confidentially disclose the crime to specifically identified individuals and receive medical treatment and counseling without triggering the official investigative process. Unrestricted reports initiate an official investigation of the crime.
- The number of reported sexual assaults in the Navy increased by 9 percent between FY08 and FY09.
- The Navy believes this change reflects improved reporting and not an increase in criminal behavior:
 - FY09 data is expanded to include reports from DoN law enforcement agencies other than NCIS.
 - Extensive Navy sexual assault education efforts have helped Sailors feel more comfortable in reporting incidents and accessing Navy support.
- The largest category of sexual assaults in FY09 was “aggravated sexual assault.” Most of these incidents involved alcohol.

April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month

This year’s theme for [Sexual Assault Awareness Month](#) across DoD is “Hurts One. Affects All ... Preventing Sexual Assault is Everyone’s Duty.” The campaign this year will focus on how sexual assault impacts mission readiness – reverberating throughout commands and beyond, harming victim’s lives, affecting everyone and undermining team effectiveness.

- The DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office and the military services are sponsoring two major events.
 - The SAPRline of Courage in the Pentagon Courtyard on April 7 (at 12 p.m.) will honor sexual assault victims throughout DoD, with senior DoD and military service leaders in attendance.
 - The Exceptional Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC) Awards program in the Pentagon Hall of Heroes on April 9 (at 2 p.m.) will recognize Vicky Shepherd from Navy Region Europe, Africa, Southwest Asia as the Navy’s Exceptional SARC.
- Navy SARCs have planned events Navywide. Local SARCs have details on specific local events.

Key Messages

- The Navy is committed to combating sexual assault everywhere – “Not in my Navy.”
- Support Sexual Assault Awareness Month events at your installation and in your community.
- The Navy embraces bystander intervention as the core of our strategy to protect Sailors from sexual assault.
- The majority of sexual assaults are servicemember-on-servicemember. This is a betrayal of the Navy Ethos.

Facts & Figures

- The Navy is actively working to improve the handling and disposition of sexual assault criminal cases.
- In an anonymous 2009 survey conducted by the Navy roughly 1 in 5 female Sailors indicated they had been sexually assaulted since they joined the service.
- In the same survey, roughly 40% of self-identified sexual assault victims indicated they did not report the incident to anyone – including their friends. This percentage is lower than in 2005 (47%).